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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

4 December 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Implications of Jordan Receiving Arms from the US,
the USSR, France, or Other Western Powers

I. INTRODUCTION

1. King Hussain feels a strong need to re-equip his armed forces after their heavy losses in the June war. This need springs more from political and psychological reasons than from military ones. Failure to get arms would give rise to severe domestic dissidence -- particularly from the officer corps on whose support Hussain depends. It would also weaken him politically in the rest of the Arab world -- inviting invidious comparison between his plight and the promptness with which Egyptian, Syrian, and Iraqi losses have been made good by the Soviets. Moscow has offered arms to Jordan on liberal terms. The \$100 million annual subsidy to Jordan from conservative oil-rich states will enable Hussain to pay Western prices, and

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he would still prefer to rely chiefly on the US or, failing this, on French, British, and other Western European sources for his needs. He does so partly because his forces already use Western arms, partly because he fears Soviet influence, and perhaps most of all, because he feels a strong need for evidence that the US and the West, to which he has always looked for support, have not deserted him. If he does not meet with reasonable satisfaction from the US and the West he would take Soviet arms.

2. If the US refuses to supply any equipment at all and thus appears to be abandoning Jordan, other monarchies would almost automatically reassess their own relations with the US and would probably take steps to improve relations with other countries in the area and outside it, even ones hostile to monarchy and conservatism. They would regret the lessening of US interest and involvement, but would believe it prudent to become somewhat less closely associated with the US. Radical forces in the Arab world would be heartened.

II. ARMS FROM THE USSR

3. For Hussain to accept Soviet arms would mean that the USSR had established a position in another country heretofore

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largely closed to it. It would mean that all major Arab forces were standardized on Soviet equipment. The Israelis would raise an alarm about this and would urgently request additional US arms to offset those the Soviets supplied to Jordan. Such a development would serve to identify the US more closely with Israel and the Soviets with the Arabs. Prospects for movement toward an accommodation between the Arabs and Israel would probably be further dimmed.

4. In Jordan itself acceptance of Soviet arms would make preservation of Western influence increasingly difficult. In time, Jordan would be likely to come to share the antipathy of the radical Arabs toward the US and the West, and at best would adopt a neutralist stance. The acceptance of Soviet arms would probably improve Hussain's popularity in the short term, but would encourage the revolutionary forces that constitute the underlying threat to continuation of the monarchy.

5. We believe that Soviet aims in offering arms to Jordan are political, not military. By this move the Soviets do not have it in mind to facilitate eventual military operations of their own in the area. Soviet policy almost certainly does not contemplate direct military intervention in intra-regional quarrels there.

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Moreover, Jordan, like those Arab states already equipped with Soviet weapons, would probably be unwilling to permit Soviet forces to use its territory except in the highly unlikely event that they were offered for use against Israel.

III. ARMS FROM WESTERN EUROPEAN SOURCES

6. Damage to US-Jordanian relations by US refusal to sell arms might be mitigated somewhat if the US facilitated acquisition of arms from other Western sources. Britain and France appear to be the most likely sources of the arms Jordan wants, but others, such as Belgium and Sweden, manufacture limited types of armaments.

France

7. De Gaulle's recent sharp condemnation of Israel and his suspension of military supplies to Israel on the eve of the war have already enhanced France's image in the Arab world. Sales of French arms, even through a third country intermediary, would further boost French prestige in both Jordan and in other Arab countries; it is not likely to benefit the US position in Jordan. While France could supply virtually all the categories of arms

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that Jordan wants, Jordan is particularly interested in French supersonic aircraft. Direct sales of French equipment to Jordan, especially of such significant items as Mirage aircraft, would bring a further deterioration of French-Israeli relations.

The UK

8. The UK has long been a major source of military supply for Jordan and has already provided a few aircraft since the war, though the British appear to be encountering difficulties in finding enough Hawker-Hunters to replace the two squadrons Jordan lost in the war. (The specific model Jordan wants is no longer in production.) Britain would be eager to earn hard currency from arms sales to Jordan and would not be much concerned at Israel's reaction. While the Jordanians have not so far pressed for ground equipment, they are familiar with British weapons and would probably prefer them as a first alternative to US equipment.

IV. ARMS FROM THE US

9. US agreement to provide a substantial proportion of the \$15-20 million in arms that Jordan has requested would help to

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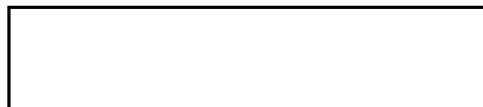
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slow the decline in US influence in the Arab world evident since the Arab-Israeli war. It would be interpreted both in Jordan and by other Arab regimes friendly to the US as tangible evidence that the US is not abandoning them. While provision of US arms would by no means fully restore US prestige in Jordan or in the area, particularly as long as Israel continues to occupy important Arab territories, it would encourage the moderate Arabs, for whom Hussain is at present the foremost spokesman, to maintain their relations with the US. It would also help Hussain maintain his moderate course in seeking an arrangement with Israel.

10. No matter what the source of Hussain's arms, there is not likely to be any significant effect on the military balance between the Arab states and Israel. Nonetheless, the latter would protest vigorously if the US resumed arms supply to Jordan. Tel Aviv would be certain to use shipments of arms to Jordan from any source as an argument for additional US aid.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



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